Prevention of Cruelty (Animal Birth Control) Rules, 2023

Why in news?

The growing population of street dogs has posed increasing challenges for municipalities and cities across the country.

What is the issue with stray dogs?

- Dogs have a unique relationship with man but recently strays act as a public health concern.
- There has been many incidents of stray dogs attacking children as well as adults.
- **Reasons -**
    1. Uncontrolled population of stray dogs.
    2. Becoming aggressive when they perceive a threat.
    3. Neglect, abuse or forcibly relocation.
    4. Illness, hunger, protection of litters.
    5. Territorial behaviour of dogs living as a community.
    6. Irresponsible ownership.

> *According to 2019 livestock census, India has nearly 1.5 crore stray dog population.*

What did the government do for human-dog conflict?

- The government wants to ensure safe society for everyone - humans and dogs alike.
- The Prevention of Cruelty (Animal Birth Control) Rules 2023 rules was notified by the central government to address these challenges.
- The 2023 rules is under Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act, 1960 and supersedes the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules, 2001.
- The Rules gives a humane approach that balances out the welfare of dogs while taking into consideration the concerns of humans.

What does the new 2023 Prevention of Cruelty rules say?

- The 2023 rules attempt to resolve the shortcoming of Animal birth control (ABC) by standardising processes.
- The Rules also provides the guidelines how to deal with the human and stray dog conflicts without relocating the dogs in an area.
- **The onus -** The burden of ABC implementation will fall on the Animal Birth Control Monitoring Committees at the State, district and municipality levels.
- The Municipal Corporations need to implement the ABC and Anti Rabies Program

jointly.
- The ABC Programme needs to be carried out by Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) recognized organization.
- These organisations should be specifically recognised for Animal Birth Control programme.
- **Maintenance of stray animals -** It is the duty of the local authorities to maintain and control the population of stray animals.
- They will be held responsible for any violation and animal-human conflicts.

- **Euthanasia -** The Rules also suggest euthanasia for 'incurably ill and mortally wounded dogs' as diagnosed and declared by the Local Animal Birth Control Monitoring Committee.
- It should be done in a humane manner by a qualified veterinarian.
- **Complaint Centre -** It also suggests establishment of an Animal Help Centre where complaints about dog or cat bites can be registered.
- **Feed Spots -** The Rules want the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) to designate feed spots for dogs which shall be least frequented by children and senior citizens.

What are the requirements for new ABC program rules?

- The rules require the following things for its smooth process.
    1. Updated infrastructure investments for the capture, housing, surgery and release of dogs.
    2. Specific processes to be recorded such as keeping and reporting.
    3. The procedures for responding to conflict situations.
    4. Engagement of organisations to ensure that the standards of ABC are high.
    5. Differentiation of street dogs from pet dogs to improve data collection and analysis.

What could be done further?

- Waste management, social marketing and human behaviour change.
- Responsible pet ownership and protection of activists.

- Funding research and create model programmes for dog bite mitigation.

- Improve ABC programme standards through training.
- Adoption of Indian dogs as opposed to feeding the commercial pet trade through animal purchases and it reduces stray dogs.

References

1. The Hindu - Tackling the human-dog conflict
2. PIB - Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 notified by Centre

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